

Marquette Interchange Newsletter No. 1

Transportation District 2
June 2000

Open House Meeting

The study team will host its first open house meeting on July 18 and 19 at Marquette University's Alumni Memorial Union on 15th and Wells Street from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. both days. The meeting will give you the opportunity to:

- take a shuttle over to the interchange and see first-hand the condition of the bridges
- meet the study team
- look at different reconstruction plans
- suggest new alternatives

Please attend this important meeting so your views will be heard. The same information will be presented both days.

WisDOT Begins Study of Marquette Interchange

The Marquette Interchange is the cornerstone of southeast Wisconsin's freeway system (see [map](#)). Most of the Milwaukee area freeways intersect at the Marquette Interchange, which links one-third of Wisconsin's freeway traffic to the rest of the country. It is one of the most heavily traveled interchanges in Wisconsin with almost 300,000 cars and trucks using it every day.

The interchange has deteriorated due to high traffic volumes, its unique design, melting snow, salt, studded snow tires, and age.

Because of its key role in the freeway system and its deterioration, the condition of the Marquette Interchange must be addressed soon.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is undertaking a 24-month study to determine how the interchange should be rebuilt to accommodate the safe, efficient flow of traffic and the economic well-being of Wisconsin. The area to be studied is bounded by:

- 35th Street on the west
- Lake Interchange (Lincoln Memorial Drive) on the east
- North Avenue on the north
- Burnham Canal (near the south end of the High Rise bridge) on the south

Why is the study being done?

The interchange needs to be addressed for several reasons, including deteriorated bridges, safety, traffic congestion, and the economic well-being of the state.

Failure to address the interchange's condition could lead to traffic restrictions and congestion and eventually closing sections of the interchange. Some of the existing problems are:

- The bridges in the interchange are rapidly deteriorating. They were built using now outdated concrete “voided slab” and “box girder” designs. This makes it almost impossible to replace the decks because they are a key part of the bridges’ structure. If the decks are removed without special shoring up, the bridges could collapse. Other more common bridge designs make it easier to replace deteriorated decks (see [insert](#)).
- Steel reinforcing bars in the bridge decks are rusting, causing the concrete bonded to the steel to separate into layers. This weakens the load-carrying capacity of the bridges.
- The deteriorated areas, along with cracks in the surface concrete, allow salt-laden water to infiltrate the interior of the bridges and further deteriorate the interior concrete and the entire structure. This has led to pieces of concrete falling off onto the parking lots below the interchange.
- Maintaining the bridges has become increasingly expensive and disruptive.
- There have been two major asphalt overlays and monthly patching and joint repairs. This inconveniences motorists because of ongoing lane closures. Like patching an old roof, maintenance has helped extend the life of the bridges. But, like a roof that can no longer be effectively patched, piecemeal reconstruction and maintenance may no longer be the appropriate solution.

What will the study include?

The purpose of this comprehensive study is to develop and evaluate alternative plans to address this vital link in Wisconsin’s transportation infrastructure. The plans will address:

- The concerns and needs of the local community and state
- State and federal environmental requirements
- Design alternatives that consider traffic flow, safety, and community needs
- The impacts on the environment and the economy of the area and state
- Ways that the selected plan can reflect the architectural themes and style of the surrounding community

A conceptual plan for maintaining adequate access to and through downtown during construction will be developed. The plan will be finalized prior to construction.

The study began in April 2000 and will continue for approximately 24 months. After the study is completed, the next step will be to design the plan recommended by the study.

Opportunities for Community Involvement

There will be numerous opportunities for you to be involved and provide input before a plan for the interchange is selected. These opportunities include:

- Open house meetings at key points in the study. The July 18-19 meeting is the first of the planned open house meetings
- Newsletters like this one, announcing upcoming open house meetings
- A public hearing in 2001 before a plan for the interchange is recommended
- Meetings with federal, state, and local elected officials
- Workshops for landowners adjacent to the interchange, at which they can identify concerns, discuss alternative plans, and assess advantages and disadvantages of different plans
- A community outreach group made up of representatives of neighborhood, community, and business groups
- A workshop to help determine ways to reduce the effects of construction on businesses, residents, commuters, community services, and special events
- A web site (www.dot.state.wi.us/dtd/hdist2/m-index.htm) where you can learn about the study and submit comments to the study team

Mailing List Additions

If you did not receive this newsletter in the mail, you are not on the mailing list for the Marquette Interchange Study. To add your name, or to make a correction, please send your name, address and affiliation to:

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Meeting Information

The July 18 and 19 public information meeting will be held in the 3rd floor of the Alumni Memorial Union. Free parking is available in a parking structure on the west side of 16th Street between Wells St. and Wisconsin Ave. Bus routes 1, 2, 10, 12, 20, 30, and 31 are within 3 blocks of the meeting room.

Free shuttles will give rides from the Union to Lot M under the interchange and back from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 4 to 8 p.m. if you wish to see the condition of the interchange.

If you would like a copy of this in Spanish, please contact Gladys Gonzalez at 414-359-2320. Si prefieres una copia en español, por favor llama Gladys Gonzalez al 414-359-2320.